

REMARKS

Claims 3 and 17 stand objected to for having informalities. These claims have been amended in a readily apparent manner to remove the informalities. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 3-7 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakabayashi et al. in view of Masaki. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, because the references, alone or in combination, do not disclose or suggest the fine irregularities that are evenly formed on the planar or curved light reflecting surface of the light guide plate, as described in claim 3.

In Fig. 23C, the Nakabayashi et al. reference discloses multiple grooves 204 that are formed by slopes 241 and 242 and cut into the surfaces 311, 312 of the light guide members 321, 322 for reflecting light from the light sources 2. As properly recognized by the Examiner, the Nakabayashi et al. reference does not disclose fine irregularities formed on the light-reflecting surface of the light guide plate.

The Masaki reference discloses a light guide plate 1 having spaced light-emerging patterns 11 made up of dots that are denser farther away from the light source 2. The reference teaches that this arrangement enables the light guide plate to make the reflection uniform, even away from the light source (see col. 4, lines 57-60).

As described above, the light guide members of Nakabayashi et al. have substantially deep grooves that are cut into the light reflecting surfaces. Thus, if the dotted patterns of Masaki were combined with the light guide members of Nakabayashi et al., the

resulting device would have the dotted patterns being formed in the grooves. Therefore, even if combined, the cited references still would not disclose or suggest the claimed fine irregularities that are formed on the planar or curved surface of the light guide.

Moreover, the Masaki reference teaches that the dots on the patterns of the light guide plate become denser away from the light source. Thus, if combined with the light guide of Nakabayashi et al., the resulting device would also have patterns that have dots that are more dense away from the light sources. In contrast, the claimed fine irregularities of the present invention are evenly formed on the planar or curved reflecting surface. For all these reasons, claim 3 and its dependent claims 4-17 are now believed to be allowable over Nakabayashi et al. and Masaki.

Claims 8, 9 and 13-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakabayashi et al. in view of Masaki and Lin or Miura et al. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for the reasons given with respect to claim 3, from which the rejected claims depend, and because of the additional features described in these claims.

New claim 18 describes a light-scattering layer formed on the planar or curved light-reflecting surface of the light guide plate. It is believed that none of the cited references, alone or in combination, disclose this feature of the invention. Allowance of the claim is respectfully requested.

For all of the above reasons, Applicants request reconsideration and allowance of the claimed invention. The Examiner should contact Applicants' undersigned attorney if a telephone conference would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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February 1, 2007

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